



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

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Visit us on the Web!
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/US12/SR124Wallula/>

**MAKING PROGRESS
FOR SAFETY**

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US Highway 12 Coalition's Phase 1 Commemorative Drawing by Joyce Anderson

The Coalition commissioned Joyce Anderson, a Walla Walla artist, to create a watercolor drawing of the Casey Pond wildlife area. It reflects the Washington State Department of Transportation's commitment to enhancing the safety of US Highway 12 while protecting and improving the environmental character of the Casey Pond area.

If you wish to obtain a copy of the drawing, please contact the Port of Walla Walla at (509) 525-3100.



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US 12 UPDATE

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SPECIAL MENTION

Roundabouts:

The preferred option for the Pine Street Interchange includes two roundabouts, north and south of the proposed interchange, at the intersections of the ramps and local roads. Studies show that roundabouts are significantly safer than traffic signals. People drive more slowly through a roundabout, reducing the frequency and severity of accidents. In addition, drivers can no longer run a red light or turn left in front of oncoming cars, actions that can result in severe or fatal injuries.



Second Phase Nearly Complete

WSDOT and its contractor, Steelman-Duff Inc. of Clarkston, have nearly completed the SR 124 to McNary Pool project. This is the second Phase of the corridor improvements to widen US 12 to four lanes from SR 124 to Walla Walla. Travelers have enjoyed the safer four-lane configuration since early summer. The additional lanes provide more maneuverability and eliminate the need for risky passing that resulted in serious accidents along US 12. The east and westbound lanes are now separated by a median, greatly reducing the chance of head on collisions.

Loop. Re-seeding all disturbed earth in the fall, and other miscellaneous work, is all that remains. The project is scheduled to be finished by the end of October 2005.



Looking West on US 12 Phase 2

As part of this project, the contractor recently installed a traffic signal at the SR 124 and US 12 intersection, providing a safer, more controlled intersection. The Humorist Street signal was updated and acceleration and deceleration lanes were constructed to improve the safety and operation of the intersection. Access to Maple Street and Basin Drive was closed and frontage roads were constructed to provide access to Humorist and Hanson

WSDOT opened the new lanes to traffic ahead of schedule and we anticipate completing the construction within the budgeted amount.

This project witnessed a unique partnership between WSDOT, the Contractor, the Columbia School District, and the US Bureau of Reclamation. The construction of the new lanes required removing

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COALITION'S CORNER

*By James M. Kuntz
Port of Walla Walla, Executive Director
U.S. Highway 12 Coalition Member*

COALITION SECURES ADDITIONAL DOLLARS FOR U.S. HIGHWAY 12 FOUR-LANING

Thanks to the efforts of Senator Patty Murray and Representative Cathy McMorris, \$5.9 million was included in the recently passed federal Transportation Equity Act Legislation. This money will be

earmarked for improvements on US 12 from McDonald Road to Walla Walla. Since 2002, the U.S. Highway 12 Coalition has secured over \$122 million in federal and state resources for U.S. Highway 12 four-laning.

This past spring, the Washington State Legislature approved a 9.5¢

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Transportation Partnership Tax Package

In April, 2005, The Washington State Legislature recognized the need for additional funds to build highway improvements across Washington state, targeting safety and economic vitality. In a collaborative move accross party lines, lawmakers passed the 2005 Transportation Partnership Package, funding 274 projects statewide. Revenue for these new projects comes from a 9 ½ cent gas tax increase, phased in over four years, as well as new vehicle weight fees and increased licensing fees.

The good news for the Walla Walla County is that \$62 million of the partnership package is earmarked for critical local highway improvements:

- US 12/SR 124 Interchange at Burbank: The partnership package provides \$20 million for a new interchange at Burbank, to reduce the risk of collisions at the busy intersection of US 12 and SR 124. Constructing the Burbank interchange will improve safety, decrease congestion, and enhance economic vitality for the area.
- Myra Road Extension (SR 125/ SR 12 Interconnect): The partnership package provides \$4.2 million to Walla Walla County to extend Myra Road to intersect with US 12 at the proposed Pine Street overpass. The project provides an important link to SR 125, increasing freight mobility and decreasing congestion on SR 125 through Walla Walla.
- US 12/McDonald Road to Walla Walla Add Lanes: The partnership package provides \$36 million for eight miles of new four-lane divided highway for US 12, west of Walla Walla. WSDOT will construct three channelized intersections and an overpass with ramps at Pine Street.
- US 12 Waitsburg to Asotin Roadside Safety: The partnership package funds \$1.9 million of safety improvements along US 12 to enhance motorist safety by reducing the severity of collisions. Improvements include installing guardrail, removing fixed objects and improving roadsides.

The 2005 Transportation Partnership Funding package provides gas tax money for these projects. If approved by voters, Washington State Initiative 912 would repeal these gas taxes and eliminate this project funding.

“Washington's Future Just Got Better”

MAKING EVERY DOLLAR COUNT.

2005 TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

(Phase 2 - continued from Page 1)

part of a hillside near Casey Pond at the east end of the project. Originally, the contract called for hauling this material to the west end of the project to build up a base for the new roadway near the Snake River Bridge. At the same time, the Columbia School District had plans to level 22 acres of district property in Burbank to build six new ball fields, which required removing 60,000 cubic yards of dirt.

The school district proposed that WSDOT use their material from the ball field area for the construction at the west end of the project, eliminating the need to haul material from the east end of the project. WSDOT accepted the proposal, saving an estimated \$40,000 in hauling expenses. The Bureau of Reclamation provided a location for the extra

material at the east end of the project, just to the west of the hillside that was leveled. A win for all parties involved!

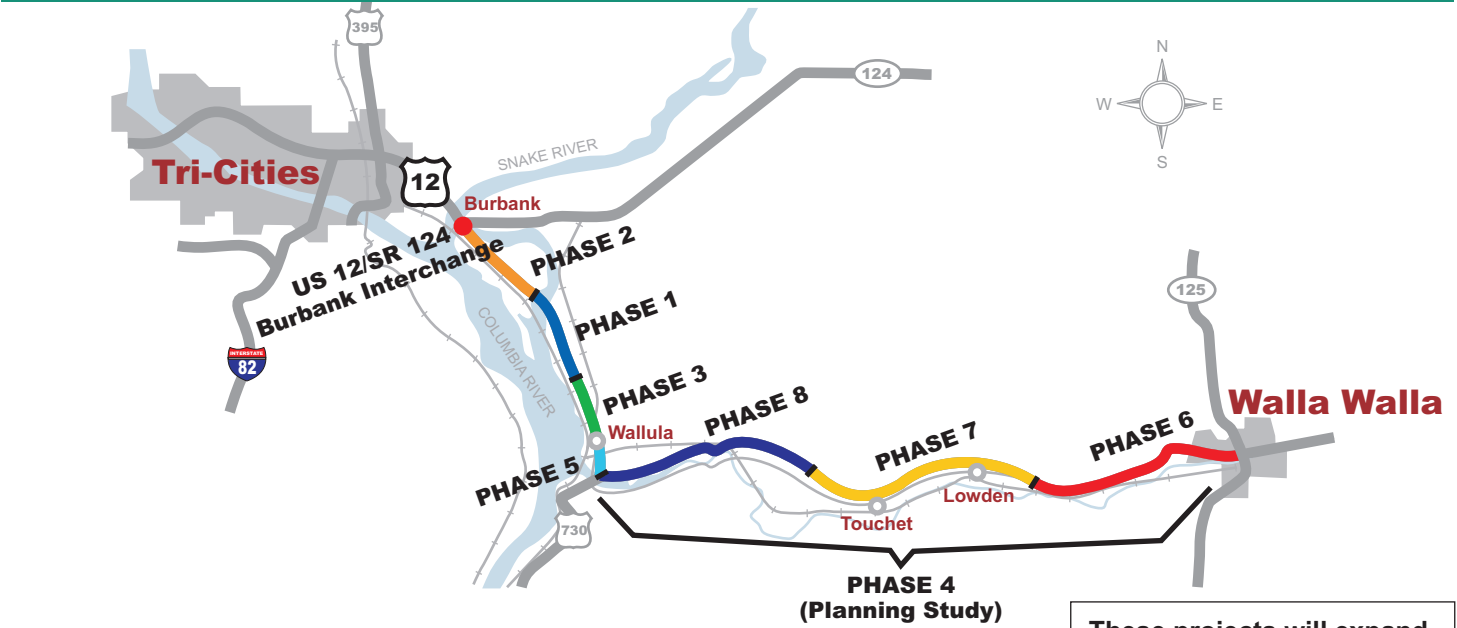


(Coalition - continued from Page 1)

per gallon gas tax increase that has earmarked \$60.23 million in transportation improvements for Walla Walla County. This new funding would complete the four-laning of US 12 from McDonald Road to Walla Walla, extend Myra Road to US Highway 12 and construct a grade separated interchange at U.S. Highway 12 and SR 124 in

Burbank. This revenue package represents the single largest appropriation the Coalition has obtained for the project. However, this funding is subject to being repealed as a result of Initiative 912, which is seeking voter approval to overturn the 9.5¢ per gallon gas tax increase.

PROJECT UPDATES



US 12/SR 124 - Burbank Interchange This project will construct an interchange at the junction of US 12 and SR 124. Work on this project is on hold until after the outcome of the November 2005 ballot measure (State Initiative 912).

PHASE 1 - US 12 McNary Pool to Attalia This project added an additional lane in each direction from Casey Pond to the Dodd Road area, replaced a bridge, and constructed environmental mitigation features. Work was completed on August 6, 2004.

PHASE 2 - SR 124 to McNary Pool This project added one additional lane in each direction from SR 124 to Casey Pond for a total of four lanes. Construction is complete except for fall seeding.

PHASE 3 - Attalia Vicinity This project will add one additional lane in each direction from the Dodd Road area to the Boise Cascade area for a total of four lanes. Design work is underway. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2006.

PHASE 4 - Walla Walla to Wallula Planning Study This planning study, which encompasses Phases 6, 7, and 8, will investigate and document existing social, economic, and environmental conditions and determine the preferred alignment of US 12 from Walla Walla to the Wallula Junction. Preliminary design and environmental documentation continues with the main focus being on Phases 6 and 8.

PHASE 5 - Attalia Vicinity to US 730 This project will add one additional lane in each direction from the Boise Cascade area to the Wallula Junction for a total of four lanes. Design for Phase 5 is scheduled to begin in 2006.

PHASE 6 - McDonald Road to Walla Walla This project will relocate US 12 from the McDonald Road area to Walla Walla and expand it to a four-lane divided highway. Recent progress includes preliminary environmental reports, identification of a preferred highway location, and preliminary designs of three intersections and an interchange.

PHASE 7 - Nine Mile Hill to McDonald Road
PHASE 8 - Wallula Junction to Nine Mile Hill These projects will reconstruct US 12 from Wallula Junction to the McDonald Road area as a four-lane divided highway. Preliminary design has identified corridors for further environmental and engineering studies. This project is not currently funded for design or construction.

These projects will expand the two-lane highway to a four-lane divided highway between Burbank and Walla Walla. This work will improve safety, decrease congestion, and enhance economic vitality.

IT'S YOUR NICKEL. WATCH IT WORK.

These projects are funded in part by the 2003 Legislative Transportation Funding Package. The main source of funding is a 5¢ increase in the gas tax. The package also includes an increase in the large truck gross weight fee and a 0.3 percent vehicle sales tax.

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MAKING EVERY DOLLAR COUNT.

2005 TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

These projects are funded in part by the 2005 Transportation Partnership Funding Package. The main source of funding is a 9.5¢ increase in the gas tax, phased in over four years. The package also includes a new vehicle weight fee and increases in other license fees and charges.